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**SEP 17 1974**

Texas Coastal Resources Management Program

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## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES

Prepared by

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October 1970

for

COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

INTERAGENCY NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL

DIVISION OF PLANNING COORDINATION

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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# HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TEXAS COASTAL ZONE

## I. OVERVIEW

That portion of Texas near the Gulf of Mexico exhibits diversity in its historical past as well as the cultural past and present. Since 1530 when Cabeza de Vaca earned himself the distinction of being the first white man to set foot on Texas soil, throughout Coronado's jaunt of 1541, Frenchman La Salle's venture, Austin's colonization effort, revolution, independence, statehood, Civil War, reconstruction, and the transition to industry, oil, and NASA, the coastal area has seen its share of significant happenings:

*Austin brought his first colonists*

*Sam Houston Led the defeat of Santa Anna*

*The only battle of the Civil War fought in Texas was  
at Sabine Pass*

*Oil, gas, and other mineral resources were developed*

*The dredging of the Houston Ship Channel made the area  
a world port*

*The few remaining Whooping Cranes winter at Aransas  
Wildlife Refuge*

*The Astrodome ushered in a new dimension for "outdoor  
sports"*

*The Manned Spacecraft Center sent men forward to their  
first walk on the moon*

These, combined with many other attractions both tangible and intangible, make this area a truly significant historical and cultural resource of the State of Texas and one which should be preserved so that future generations of Texans may cherish and enjoy it.

In preparing a synoptic discussion of the cultural and/or historical characteristics of the region, many parties provided information. Most notable among these were the State Historical

Survey Committee and the Barker Library at the University of Texas at Austin. This short report dwells briefly on each major time period in Texas history, then locates many of the significant sites (as noted by the State Historical Survey Committee), and finally proposes a set of objectives as established by the Goals for Texas investigations.

## *II. FROM DISCOVERY TO COLONIZATION*

Early in the 16th century (1519) Spain's Alonso Alvarez de Pineda was commissioned by the governor of Jamaica to find the expected strait through America which was supposed to bring the riches of the Far East within Spain's grasp. It was also his task to explore further those lands already claimed by Ponce de Leon. Pineda mapped the entire Gulf Coast from Florida to Vera Cruz and recommended that a settlement be established near the mouth of the Rio Grande, but this was not done for some two hundred years.

Entering the interior of Texas for the first time, and once again representing Spain, were Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca and three survivors of the Panfilo de Narvaez expedition which had been ship-wrecked six years earlier. After wandering through the heart of the State, they arrived at Culiacan, near the Gulf of California on May 18, 1536.

Excited by tales brought to Mexico by Cabeza de Vaca, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado left to explore this northern land. The expedition led only to disappointment, though, when instead of the Seven Cities of Cibola and the expected riches, Coronado found only wretched pueblos inhabited by unfriendly Indians. In early 1541 he set out for the promised land of Quivira, which supposedly lay to the east of his present location near Albuquerque. Once again his search ended only in disappointment and frustration when he finally found Quivira. It was nothing more than an area containing several Wichita Indian villages and the only metal visible was some copper jewelry.

Coronado traveled back to Mexico and reported to King Charles I that there was nothing significant enough in the area to justify being colonized by Spaniards.

During this same period of time, Hernando de Soto was exploring the area north of the Gulf of Mexico. After his death, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado led the expedition toward Mexico. The group attempted to link up with Coronado, but when they failed to find him they returned to the Mississippi River area. There they built some crude boats and began floating downstream. They were forced ashore near Beaumont and reached the Spanish town of Panuco. Like Coronado, De Soto's men found nothing of much value in Texas.

In the 1600's, Spaniards began settling Texas from the West. A number of missions were established along the Rio Grande border of Southwestern Texas. Then, in 1659, a mission was established near Juarez at El Paso del Norte. "After the Indian revolt in New Mexico in 1680, the retreating Spaniards and friendly Indians established the mission pueblo of Corpus Christi de la Isleta a few miles east of El Paso where the village of Ysleta now is. This was the first permanent European settlement within the present boundaries of Texas."<sup>1</sup>

In 1683 Spaniards began settling eastward and a group of missions was established near the joining of the Rio Grande and Conchos Rivers. Father Nicolas Lopez was sent from New Mexico with a military escort commanded by Don Juan Domingues de Mendoza in order to Christianize the Indians.

It was at this time that reports began arriving which confirmed suspicions that the French were beginning to settle along the Gulf Coast in direct violation of Spanish claims.

The intruder turned out to be Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle. He had actually planned to settle along the mouth of the Mississippi River, but through error, found himself at what is now Matagorda Bay. There he established Fort St. Louis. La Salle made a six-month exploration of the area around Ft. St. Louis, and returned to the settlement with only eight of his original thirty men. Upon his arrival he discovered that not one of his original four ships was left. Also, crops had failed and the Karankawa Indians were harassing those who had managed to survive. Furthermore, only 45 people were still alive in the fort. La Salle decided to seek the Mississippi River once again and seek help in Canada. He never reached his destination, however, as he was assassinated by one of his own men on March 20, 1687. Six survivors of the band eventually made their way to Canada and finally to France, but Louis XIV never saw fit to send aid to the stranded colonists.

If help had come, it would have been too late anyway, as the fort was soon destroyed and most of its inhabitants slain. Meanwhile the Spanish learned of the fort from captured French pirates and tried to find the settlement. After four attempts, Governor Alonso de Leon of Coahuila finally discovered the ruins of the ill-fated fort.

Even though fate had removed the French threat for the present, the Spanish realized that they would never be secure in the area

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<sup>1</sup>Richardson, Rupert N., Wallace, Ernest, Anderson, Adrian N., Texas the Lone Star State, (3rd ed., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.15.

until they took formal possession of it. So, when De Leon returned to Mexico he sent optimistic reports of the land of the Tejas to the viceroy. He was assisted in his pleas for a mission in this area by Father Damian Massanet, as on an earlier expedition into that area, Massanet had promised the Tejas chief that he would return.

The petition was approved and Father Massanet, three other priests, De Leon, and a military escort set out for the area in 1690. Thus, the first mission in the land of the Tejas - San Francisco de los Tejas was established.

Unfortunately, this mission also was doomed to failure. Father Massanet and De Leon returned to Mexico. In 1691, Domingo Teran de los Rios, governor of the province of Tejas and Coahuila led another expedition into the area. They discovered that the crops were failing, an epidemic had killed many Indians and one of the priests, and the Indians had gradually become hostile to the intruders.

Early in 1692 Teran departed, leaving behind only Massanet and a small guard, to return to Mexico in order to seek help. A relief expedition from Monclove brought supplies, but already it was too late to be of any value. Finally, even Father Massanet had to agree that the missions could not survive without support from presidios and settlements. Thus, the East Texas missions were abandoned.

During this period, France had been involved with internal difficulties and did not press her claim to the Mississippi Valley. In 1712, however, France granted the colony of Louisiana to Antoine Crozat as a commercial monopoly and La Mothe Cadillac became its first proprietary governor. In Europe, the grandson of Louis XIV of France had ascended the throne of Spain and the Spanish government gave tacit agreement to the French to settle in the Gulf area. BUT, there would be absolutely NO trading between the two areas. This is exactly what Crozat sought, and as he was readying an expedition, word arrived from Fray Francisco Hidalgo suggesting that perhaps the French would like to help establish a mission for the Tejas. Louis St. Denis was sent to try to initiate trade with the Spaniards, and he arrived on the Rio Grande at San Juan Bautista on July 18, 1714.

St. Denis and Hidalgo were immediately called to Mexico for explanations of the forbidden trade. St. Denis ended up marrying the granddaughter of the commander at San Juan Bautista and was to serve as a guide for soldiers and missionaries which New Spain (Mexico) was sending to the Tejas.

So, once again a French threat led to the establishment of missions in the land of the Tejas Indians. By the end of 1716, there were six Spanish missions from Neches to Los Adaes and within a few miles of the Red River.

In 1716, also, Martin de Alarcon was appointed governor of Coahuila and Texas and established the Villa de Bexar and Mission San Antonio de Valero in present-day San Antonio in 1718. The beginnings of this mission preceded the most successful mission system ever set up by any government in Texas.

With the Spanish occupation along the Gulf of Mexico a general program of expansion was initiated in nearly all of New Spain. The efforts were redoubled when there were threats from the French occupying areas both to the north and east of Texas; the English had settled in Georgia and by so doing, appeared as a threat to Spanish supremacy in Florida; Indian tribes were harrassing the frontier areas; and, last but not least, there were reports of precious metals to the north of San Antonio. The fast-moving Spanish occupation actually began about the year 1745 and continued spasmodically until the cession of Louisiana to Spain by France in 1762. Even though the Spanish held much territory in Texas, there were still vast areas left totally uninhabited from Tampico to the San Antonio River (Nuevo Santander) extending inland in some places for as much as 300 miles. Now, the Spanish leaders held fears that the unguarded area might be settled by the English. And already that area was also an asylum for Indian renegades and remnants of tribes.

In 1746 Jose de Escandon was given the dubious honor of settling the area and subduing the Indians. He spent two years exploring the area and making preparations and finally gathered more than 3000 soldiers and colonists at Queretaro. Between 1749 and 1755 he left 23 settlements, among the most important of which were Dolores and Laredo north of the Rio Grande.

Also established during that time by Escandon was current-day Goliad. It had first been established in 1726, but later had been moved to Victoria. Escandon had the Mission La Bahia del Espiritu Santo de Zuniga and Presidio Nuestra Senora de Loreto moved back to the San Antonio River at the present site of Goliad.

The Spanish had ambitious plans to establish missions in the area approximately 150 miles northeast of San Antonio along the San Gabriel River. With problems created by disease, indifferent Indians, and hostile Apaches, the mission enterprise of a series of three missions along San Xavier (San Gabriel) was finally abandoned. Other expansion-type missions suffered similar disasters and defeats, especially Indian trouble.

"Thus, Spain's efforts at expansion in Texas, except at Goliad and Laredo on the Rio Grande were failures. El Orcoquisac, placed at the mouth of the Trinity River to expel French intruders, may have been of some value, but it never developed into a civil settlement or even a mission center of any consequence. The mission efforts on the San Xavier and the San Saba ended in calamity, proving that Spain's chief pioneering institutions, the mission and

the presidio, could not be made effective north of San Antonio."<sup>2</sup>

Near the end of the Seven Year's War in Europe, Spain entered the conflict on France's behalf. In so doing, at the Peace of Paris in 1763, she lost Florida but was allowed to keep western Louisiana which France had ceded to her in secret.

Louisiana had been an enormous burden on France, anyway, and it was no less so to Spain. The *aggressive English* were now Spain's new neighbors instead of the *tolerant French*. After the American Revolution Spain had the uneasy Anglos to worry about, too, and if that were not enough, there were internal difficulties in New Spain.

Jose de Galvez was sent to America on behalf of Charles III to carry out certain reforms there. Under this man, the Marques de Rubi was sent to explore the northern frontier. From 1767 until 1770 Rubi spent three years traveling in the Area and made exhaustive reports and recommendations which resulted in a *Regulation for the Presidios* on September 10, 1772.

Among other things, the regulations called for "(1) the abandonment of all missions and presidios except San Antonio and La Bahia, (2) the strengthening of San Antonio de Bexar by moving to it settlers from Los Ais and Los Adaes, and (3) the inauguration of a new Indian program calling for friendly relations with the northern tribes and a war of extermination against the Apaches. Thus Spain had determined not only to give up all attempts to occupy the country north of San Antonio but also to abandon the settlements in East Texas and the presidio and mission on the Trinity, no longer needed to prevent intrusions from the east."<sup>3</sup>

In 1800 Napoleon entered upon a grandiose plan for reinstating French influence in the North American continent and cajoled the king of Spain into transferring Louisiana once again to France. "Then, in 1803, realizing that it would be difficult to hold the province in the event of a war with Great Britain, he broke his pledge to Spain not to alienate it and sold it to the United States. Now Texas was once again on the border of New Spain, and an indefinite boundary separated it from the land-hungry Americans. To meet the new situation Spain adopted a three fold imperial policy: first, to hold the territory with its ancient boundaries unimpaired; second, to increase its garrisons and colonize the territory with loyal Spanish subjects; and third, to keep out Anglo-American intruders."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 33.



The Adams-De Onis, or Florida Purchase Treaty, signed in 1819 after the Napoleonic Wars aided Spain greatly in their efforts to enforce this policy. In accordance with the terms of the treaty, the United States was given Florida from Spain and gave up any claim to Texas that she MIGHT have had. Perhaps even more important, the Louisiana-Texas boundary was at last settled. It was established as "the west bank of the Salina from its mouth to the 32nd parallel, thence north to the Red River, along the south bank of that stream to the 100th meridian, thence north to the Arkansas River, along the south or west bank of that stream to its source, and thence northward to the 42nd parallel. The eastern boundary of Texas as determined by the agreement remains unchanged to this day."<sup>5</sup>

Even with all of the Spanish efforts to colonize Texas, at the time of the Adams-De Onis Treaty, the only permanent settlements were at San Antonio de Bexar, La Bahia (Goliad) and the pueblo of Nacogdoches. Still fearful of Anglo-American trespassing, Spain once again undertook the task of populating the province. The entire population of Texas at that time has been estimated at 4,155<sup>6</sup> one fourth of whom were soldiers. "The efforts of officials to introduce foreigners were offset in great measure by the opposition of Nemesio Salcedo, commandant general of the Interior Provinces, who looked with suspicion on all immigrants from Louisiana, and stoutly forbade commercial relations with that country."<sup>7</sup>

Those who tried to do so anyway, among them a Louisiana trader by the name of Philip Nolan, were promptly put to death. Another martyr, Miguel Hidalgo, a priest, was killed for raising the banner of revolt against the harsh Spanish government.

Hidalgo's rebellion in 1810 was suppressed mainly because the upper classes of Mexico, the merchants, and the clergy would not join the movement. Nevertheless, his death planted the seeds of rebellion in the minds of many others. Subjects in New Spain were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with Spain, especially after Napoleon had taken Ferdinand VII prisoner and put Joseph Bonaparte on the Spanish throne.

So, with the end of the European wars in 1819, the revolution in New Spain was continued under new leadership. In Spain, Ferdinand was reinstated and made to restore the liberal constitution of 1812. This constitution, under which, of course New

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

Spain must also live, was viewed as a threat by the higher classes in Mexico and also infuriated the priests because of certain anti-clerical policies that it contained. Thus, "Old Spain had become too liberal for New Spain."<sup>8</sup> On February 24, 1821, the two factions in Mexico entered an agreement by which New Spain was declared an "independent, moderate, constitutional monarchy."<sup>9</sup> It also guaranteed the Catholic religion and proclaimed racial equality. In August, the last Spanish viceroy recognized Mexican independence. This final severing of ties with the mother country was to have far-reaching effects on subsequent Texas history.

### III. COLONIZATION BY ANGLO-AMERICANS

On December 23, 1820, Moses Austin sought permission from Governor Antonio de Martinez in San Antonio to establish an American colony consisting of 300 families in Texas. Austin had come from Missouri, which was once a part of Louisiana; thus, he was received as a former Spanish citizen and was given permission on January 17, 1821, to settle his families in Texas.

Shortly after Austin's return to Missouri he died, leaving the fulfillment of his commission to his son, Stephen F. Austin. Although he was only 27 years old at the time, the younger Austin was well-educated and already experienced in business and legal matters. In addition, he had served for five years in the Missouri Territory legislature and had held an appointment as a district judge in Arkansas. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Stephen F. Austin was well acquainted with the type of people that lived in that area and that would more than likely comprise his group of colonists.

So, in 1821, the younger Austin went to San Antonio with a small party of men and was given permission from the governor to carry out his father's dream. News about Austin's arrangements out-distanced his travels, and when he returned to Natchitoches, Louisiana, he found almost a hundred letters from people seeking to make the move into Texas. After sending the schooner *Lively* ahead of him with essential cargo for establishing a colony, Austin returned to Texas by way of Nacogdoches where he met a group of waiting colonists. When Austin reached the Brazos River, he found eager colonists already establishing homesites. The *Lively*, missing its destination of the Colorado River mouth, had returned to Louisiana with its discouraged colonists.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

"The first settler to enter the colony, Andrew Robinson, crossed the Brazos River at the La Bahia Road crossing in November 1821. The ferry he operated marked the settlement of Washington-on-the-Brazos."<sup>10</sup>

After helping to settle his colonists, Austin returned to San Antonio in March 1822. It was at that late date that Governor Martinez gave him the unwelcomed news that officials in Monterey did not recognize the arrangement made with Moses Austin and the authority of Stephen Austin to carry them out. Martinez suggested that Austin travel to Mexico immediately to straighten matters out with the central government. After leaving Josiah Bell in charge of the colony, Austin left for Mexico.

The political situation in Mexico was, to say the least, one of confusion. Political power had changed hands twice, but finally, on April 14, 1823, almost a year after his arrival in Mexico City, Stephen F. Austin's colonization grant was approved.

In August 1823, Austin returned to his colony with Baron de Bastrop, the commissioner who would have the authority to grant land titles. Although the colony had suffered extensive hardships enough to convince some colonists to return to the United States, the promise of soon-to-be-issued land titles and setting up of local governing officials helped the morale of the group greatly.

The local governmental headquarters was set up on the Brazos River and subsequently named San Felipe de Austin. The 272 land grants that Bastrop issued extended from the Brazos, Colorado and Bernard Rivers all the way to the Texas Gulf Coast. "By the terms of the imperial law each family was to receive one *labor* (177 acres) if engaged in farming, and a *sitio* (a square league or about 4,428 acres) for stock raising. Of course, most of the colonists preferred to be classed as stock raisers, and only about 20 titles called for less than a *sitio*. Special grants were made to a few men as compensation for substantial improvements such as mills... Austin, as *empresario*, received about 22 *sitios*. The law required that land should be occupied and improved within two years after the receipt of the deed, that colonists must profess the Catholic religion, that for six years they would be exempt from the payment of tithes and duties on imports, and that children of slaves born in the empire would be free at the age of fourteen."<sup>11</sup>

The Imperial Colonization Law, under which Austin received permission to carry on in his father's behalf, was not a national program, but a special arrangement worked out to aid Stephen Austin.

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 50.

It was not until August 1824 that the Mexican Congress issued a law covering colonization. This law decreed that, with certain exceptions, the national government turned over the dealing of public lands to local governments. The exceptions included the amount of land that could be issued to an individual (no more than 11 *sitios*), areas in which foreigners could not settle (ten leagues of the coast and twenty leagues from an international boundary), no alien could receive a grant, and, finally, that until 1840 no foreigner would be prohibited entrance to the lands as a colonist.

It was the great success of the colonization activities which nearly spelled its doom. Without warning, on April 6, 1830, the Mexican government forbade further colonization efforts. Through reports of such men as General Manuel Mier y Teran, the Mexicans were brought to realize the very real threat that existed if such extensive Anglo-American activity were to continue. General Teran recommended settling more Mexicans, Swiss, Germans and soldiers in the areas already occupied by American colonists. The April 6, 1830 decree forbid citizens of foreign countries which shared boundaries with Mexico from colonizing Mexican territory. This decree, of course, effectively shut off the flow of Anglo-Americans into Mexican-held Texas. This seemed to spell disaster to the colonists. In April 1833, a convention was held in which the colonists drafted a petition designed to convince the Mexicans to repeal the law. Stephen Austin carried it to Mexico City and, effective May 1, 1834, the decree was duly repealed.

Numerous colonization projects were begun, among them, the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company and the Nashville Company. Other colonies, those of James Power (a native-born Irishman) and James Hewetson of Monclova and of John McMullen and James McGloin sought to draw Europeans into the area.

Colonization legally ended when, by an act of the Congress of the Republic in June, 1837, it was stated that all *empresarios* ended on the day of the declaration of independence on March 2, 1836.

#### IV. THE INEVITABLE REVOLUTION

There were a number of contributing causes to the final break with Mexico. The colonists that came to Texas been exposed to self-government; they considered Mexicans inferior and resented both the governmental authority and having Mexican troops quartered among them. They hated the fact that civil matters were, at best, secondary to military matters. Finally, they did not like the close connections between the church and the state. These traits lay in direct opposition to Mexican customs. Most citizens of New Spain were very used to being subjugated, especially after being held by Spain for 300 years. They did not understand their own constitution which the Anglos considered sadly lacking in many respects. Some of these differences in custom and tradition could

only accent mistrust and suspicion. Mexican President Guerrero's proclamation of the emancipation of slavery in the colonies (September 15, 1829) and the decree of April 6, 1830 did little to cement friendly relations between the Mexicans and the Anglo-Americans.

Colonel John Davis Bradburn, a Kentuckian in Mexican service, who was commander at Anahuac, added immeasurably to the already strained relations between Mexico and Texas. The most serious of his numerous blunders was the imprisonment of William B. Travis and Pratick Jack after they had irritated him by implying that a force was coming from Louisiana to retrieve some slaves which Bradburn would not release. The extended imprisonment of the two men brought open resistance from the colonists. William H. Jack, Patrick's brother, first tried legal means to have his brother released, and, when that failed, urged colonists to join him in attacking Bradburn. On June 10, 1832, 160 colonists, including some from Brazoria, were outside Anahuac awaiting the arrival of a cannon.

Colonel Jose de las Piedras, Mexican commander at Nacogdoches, arrived with orders to settle the dispute peacefully. The prisoners were released to civil authorities for trial and Bradburn resigned his post. Thus, for the moment at least, pitched battle was avoided.

John Austin, one of the colonists from Brazoria who had lent his support at Anahuac, returned home, retrieved three cannons and some men from Brazoria, and started by boat down the Brazos River toward Anahuac. The boat was stopped by Mexican officials at Velasco and a bloody battle was fought in which the colonists emerged victorious.

This engagement did much to help fan the flame of resistance among the Anglos. They were resolved to rid all the settlements of Mexican soldiers. This they finally did succeed in doing.

Since, so far, the colonists had been so successful, they decided to press for some concessions from the Mexican government. On August 22, a letter was sent from San Felipe to all the districts requesting that delegates be sent to San Felipe on October 1, 1832 for a convention. Sixteen districts acknowledged by sending 58 delegates to the proceedings. Stephen F. Austin was elected president and various committees were set up to investigate topics and propose legislation. Even with the former problems with the Mexicans, the colonists professed loyalty to the new Mexican government headed by Santa Anna and the Mexican constitution.

"The convention placed the greatest emphasis on two requests made of the government at Mexico City: first, the repeal of that part of the act of April 6, 1830, prohibiting Anglo-American immigration; and, secondly, separation from Coahuila and admission

of Texas to the Mexican confederation as a state. There was a lengthy and urgent memorial on each. The convention adjourned on October 6."<sup>12</sup>

For some obscure reason the petitions were never presented to the Mexican government. The governor reminded the Texans that the whole idea of the convention itself was in violation of Mexican laws and that Santa Anna would not look upon the convention favorably.

This information did not frighten the colonists in the least. And, in fact, on April 1, 1833, a second convention was held. Chairman of this convention was William H. Wharton, a radical member of one of the two factions of the Texas group. Much the same grievances were aired as at the first convention with the same two major requests of the Mexican government heading the list. And, it was at this second convention that a highly improper - at least in the eyes of the Mexican government - state constitution was drafted. To add insult to injury, the Texans petitioned the central government for approval.

Once again Stephen F. Austin was entrusted with pleading their cause in Mexico City. When he arrived there on July 18, Santa Anna was away, so he met with the Vice-President, Gomez Farias. On October 1, after much frustrating delay, Austin flatly told the Vice-President that if the government would not act, the state government would be set up WITHOUT its approval. On November 5 Austin finally had his long-awaited conference with Santa Anna. The only request that was not approved was the separation of Texas from Coahuila.

Austin left Mexico City on December 10th and on his way back to Texas he stopped at Saltillo on business. There, on January 3, 1834, he was placed under arrest for a letter written in the heat of passion stating that the Texans WOULD set up their own state government. It wasn't until July, 1835 that his release was finally secured.

In April of 1834, the formerly liberal Santa Anna set himself up a dictator after he could see that the army, the clergy, and wealthier classes would oppose any liberal reforms. Consequently, his vice president was exiled and congress was disbanded. October, 1835 saw the form of government change from a federalist system to a highly centralized system with the ruthless Santa Anna in sole command.

*The actual beginning of the revolution can be dated at October 2, 1835. Mexican Colonel Ugartechea was sent to Gonzales in order to retrieve a 6 pounder cannon which had been loaned to Green DeWitt, the empresario, for defense against Indians. The Texans saw this as an attempt to keep them from resisting the military forces of*

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

Santa Anna and consequently hid the cannon. Runners were sent to secure aid for the Texans and the men were able to send the small Mexican force fleeing for San Antonio. Now the Revolution was officially underway.

A force under Captain George Collinsworth captured Goliad with its extensive supplies and the colonists headed for San Antonio. On December 5, a force of about 300 volunteers under Ben Milam drove Mexican General Cos and his army from the city, but allowed them to return to Mexico.

In March, 1836, James W. Fannin, Jr., with about 450 volunteers sought to aid the defenders of the Alamo who were being besieged by Santa Anna. He was never able to arrive there because of transportation problems. On March 13th and 14th, General Houston ordered him and his men to retreat to Victoria, since it was already too late to help those at the Alamo. After being delayed while waiting for some of his men who had been sent to Refugio to evacuate settlers, he finally began retreating on March 19th. In one of the best known events of the Texas Revolution, Fannin and his men were surrounded on an open prairie by superior Mexican forces, and the next day they surrendered as prisoners of war. A week later, on Palm Sunday, Fannin and his remaining 350 men were slain. News of the massacre aroused citizens of the United States sufficiently for them to send financial and moral support.

On March 6, 150 men defending the Alamo in San Antonio were also slain at the hands of Santa Anna. Among those men were William B. Travis, David Crockett and his "Tennessee boys," Jim Bowie, and James Bonham. Although their situation had been hopeless from the beginning, the delay caused to Santa Anna bought much-needed time for the struggling Texans. For these few precious days, those men paid with their lives.

Several days before that, on March 2, 1836, a Declaration of Independence was presented before a Texas governmental convention. It was adopted on March 16th. The convention set itself up as the government of Texas, and Sam Houston was appointed commander in chief of land forces. As a last act, an *ad interim* government was set up on March 17th. David G. Burnet was elected president and Lorenzo de Zavala was elected as vice-president.

Houston had left the proceedings to go to the relief of the Alamo, but at Gonzales where he had stopped for reinforcements, he learned that their arrival was too late. When Houston learned of Santa Anna's army moving eastward, he decided to retreat.

With news of Houston's retreat toward San Felipe, civilians and soldiers alike also began to flee. The government had been moved first from Washington to Harrisburg (present-day Houston) and then to Galveston Island.

Santa Anna and his forces arrived at San Felipe, which Houston's men had burned in their retreat on April 7th. At Fort Bend, where he took over the ferry, he heard that the seat of government had been moved to Harrisburg; he wasted no time in setting out to cover that short 30 mile expanse, but arrived too late to capture the Texas officials. He missed them once again at Morgan's Point, on the mainland overlooking Galveston Bay. At this point, on April 20th, he set up camp "with open country on his left flank, the San Jacinto River on his right, and Buffalo Bayou and Houston's army before him."<sup>13</sup>

Sam Houston and a force of some 900 men were situated near Lynch's Ferry where Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto Rivers joined. He did not have any official strategy in mind, but adopted a watch and wait policy toward the Mexican army. The opportunity for action came on April 21st during Mexican siesta time. "A rise in the terrain hid the Texans from view until they were within 200 yards of the flimsy Mexican barricades. The shape of the terrain, the Mexican habit of taking a siesta, and the utter contempt in which Santa Anna held the Anglo-American troops, afford the only explanation of one of the most astounding facts in all military history: an army was taken by surprise by a much smaller force advancing for a mile across a prairie in the middle of an April afternoon. Santa Anna had made his second mistake within 24 hours."<sup>14</sup>

The entire Battle of San Jacinto lasted for about 18 minutes, in which time 630 Mexicans were killed, 208 were wounded, and 730 were taken prisoner, including Santa Anna himself. Nine Texans were killed and 34 wounded.

#### *V. FROM REPUBLIC TO STATEHOOD*

Along with the astounding victory, the Texans faced many problems and responsibilities. There were still about 2000 Mexican troops in Texas; Sam Houston was incapacitated by a shattered ankle; the army was as thoroughly disorganized by their stunning victory as their opponents were disorganized by defeat.

The initial problems confronting the government, then, were to establish order, strengthen the army and its supplies, and achieve Mexican recognition of Texas Independence.

Time itself was their biggest ally, for as people learned how total the victory at San Jacinto had been, peace and order were

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<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 98.



restored. Those who had fled their homes during Santa Anna's advancement returned rapidly. The government headquarters were moved from Galveston to Velasco and, on July 23, President Burnet called for a general election on the first Monday in September to establish a constitutional government.

In this election, "three major issues were to be decided: first, ratification of the constitution; second, the election of constitutional officers who would take office provided the voters approved the constitution; and third, whether the new government should seek annexation to the United States."<sup>15</sup>

The first president of the Republic of Texas was Sam Houston, who was elected by a majority of 80% of the votes cast. Ironically, of the three men who were running for the office, Stephen F. Austin received the fewest number of votes. There were several reasons for his gradual disfavor among the people of Texas. First of all was his initial opposition to the independence of Texas; he wanted only to support the Mexican constitution of 1824. Secondly, it was mainly through his efforts that the prisoner Santa Anna was saved from a firing squad and finally sent back to Mexico. And, thirdly, he was charged with not serving the Texas cause well in his trips to the United States. Houston, however, chose Austin as his Secretary of State and his other opponent for the presidency, Henry Smith, as Secretary of the Treasury. Two months later, though, Austin died and Robert A. Irion fulfilled the rest of his term in office. Another pioneer Texas leader, William H. Wharton was sent to Washington to represent the new-born Republic.

Some of the congress' first legislation included re-opening of land offices which had been closed at the beginning of the revolution. By using land as payment, the Republic was able to reimburse soldiers according to their lengths of service.

One of the infant Republic's major problems was the financing of its activities. Houston's expenses amounted to almost \$2,000,000 during his term of office, but total income for the same period was far below that level. Income included tariffs on imports, port and tonnage fees, property taxes, poll taxes, business taxes and land fees. These still did not finance the expenditures. In fact, at one time the Republic was so poor that Henry Smith, the Treasury Secretary, was unable to carry on his business because of the absence of stationery and any money with which to purchase any!

So, legislation in 1837 authorized paper money issuance. The President would issue \$650,000 worth of promissory notes payable within 12 months and including a 10% interest rate. These notes were widely circulated and suffered very little depreciation.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

During the next Presidential election, Vice-President Lamar was elected, since no President might succeed himself. During his term of office, public lands were set aside for educational purposes, the permanent capital was established and duly named Austin (October, 1839), bloody Indian wars were engaged in and the financial situation was so bad that paper money issued in the amount of \$3,552,800 was only worth 10-15 cents per dollar.

The third election saw Sam Houston once again as President. Houston embarked on an austerity program designed to pull the struggling Republic out of its financial quagmire and had fairly positive results. So carefully were expenditures controlled that in three years the government only spent \$500,000! He also instituted Indian policies that saw a number of treaties signed and the end to the Indian hostilities.

During these years the Republic saw phenomenal growth. Liberal land policies constitute the main reason for this rapidly expanding population. Homestead acts, preserving one's home from seizure for unpaid bills, also added to the populatiry of the region. And finally, contracts with foreign immigrants saw an influx of Europeans, especially Germans and some Czechs.

"In summary, the frontier line of settlement in 1846, when a state government replaced that of the Republic, extended from Corpus Christi to San Antonio on the Southwest, and thence northward through New Braunfels, Fredericksburg (settled in 1846), Austin, Belton, Waco, Dallas, and Collin County to Preston on the Red River near the present city of Dennison. The main reason for such a phenomenal extension of settlement, in the face of danger from Indian attacks and Mexican invasion was the liberal land policy of the Republic."<sup>16</sup>

From 1836 through 1839, Texas had actively sought first, recognition by the United States, and then, annexation. The Texans managed to achieve recognition by the end of Andrew Jackson's term of office. Annexation was quite another thing, though. There was so much opposition to it in the United States Congress that on January 23, 1839, Texas formally withdrew its offer of annexation. Then, finally, in October 1843, President John Tyler opened negotiations for annexation by treaty. The treaty was defeated both because it was an election year and because the question of slavery had already become an issue of conflict. Texas' annexation, in fact, became one of the campaign issues of the year. Annexation came before Congress once again on February 28, 1845 and the joint resolution was finally passed and was signed by President Tyler on March 1, 1845. Then, on October 13, 1845, the people of Texas approved both annexation and a new constitution. Congress accepted the constitution on December 29, 1845 and Texas officially became a state.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 122-123.

## VI. FROM STATEHOOD TO THE CIVIL WAR

On December 15, 1845, election of the new State officers took place. J. Pinckney Henderson was elected governor and Albert C. Horton was elected Lieutenant Governor. When the Texas received word that President Polk had signed the act admitting Texas to the Union, President Jones of the Republic called for the legislature to meet in Austin on February 16, 1846, and on February 19, the reins of government were officially passed from the President of the Republic of Texas to the State's first governor. At that same time, Sam Houston and Thomas J. Rusk were elected as the state's first senators.

As had been anticipated, Texas' annexation to the United States led directly to a war with Mexico. The Republic of Texas had established the Rio Grande as its boundary, but Mexico was unwilling to accept this boundary. President Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to move into the area along the Rio Grande to enforce the Texas claims. Skirmishes on April 24, May 8, and May 9 resulted in the United States' declaration of war upon Mexico on May 13th. The war ended with the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, by which terms Mexico recognized Texas independence and the Rio Grande boundary, and, for a payment of \$15,000,000, ceded New Mexico and upper California to the United States. Thus, Mexico lost any claim to the area north and east of the Rio Grande.

The northwestern boundaries were not settled until 1850, however, due to claims and counter-claims within the United States. Included in the Compromise of 1850, however, was the final boundary establishment which is present today; territory beyond that boundary which was claimed by Texas, was included in the Territory of New Mexico, and Texas was paid \$10,000,000 for the land.

Governor Elisha M. Pease's term of office from 1853 to 1857 saw a number of important events for the future of Texas take place. "The most important act of his administration was the school law of 1854. By its terms the state set aside \$2,000,000 of the indemnity bonds which it had acquired from the United States in the settlement of 1850 as a permanent endowment for public schools. Income from the fund was distributed each year on a per capita basis to supplement the receipts from the one-tenth of the annual revenues which the constitution had reserved for the schools."<sup>17</sup> This law provided the foundation for public education in Texas.

From the political standpoint, Pease's administration was

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

important because it was during that time that political parties were first in evidence in the state of Texas. Finally, it was during Pease's term of office that the enormous public debt was at last paid off.

In the 1857 election, Sam Houston was defeated by Hardin R. Runnels, largely due to the issues preceding the Civil War. Since many immigrants were from the deep south, they favored a states' rights candidate. But in the election of 1859, the faction supporting the Union solidified, and Sam Houston was elected governor on an independent ticket.

Once again, though, those more radical factions calling for secession of Texas from the Union were gaining ground, and on March 5, 1861, Texas formally joined the Confederate States of America and withdrew from the Union. On March 16, the same convention declared the office of the governor of Texas vacant and made Lt. Governor Edward Clark governor.

Although officially a part of the Confederacy, almost the only military activity directly related to the Civil War occurred in the area along the Gulf Coast. In July of 1861, a Federal blockade included Galveston Island; therefore, before a sizeable enemy force, Confederate troops were forced to evacuate the Island in October, 1862. John B. Magruder was determined to recover the island, though, so with 300 men he recaptured the island on January 1, 1863.

Other activity was engaged in along Sabine Pass. In September, 1862, it, also, had been captured by Federal troops and forced the Confederate soldiers out. On January 21, after their success at Galveston, Confederate forces decided to recapture that area, also. This they did successfully. A major Federal campaign was then instituted to retake Sabine Pass once again. "Four gunboats and 17 transports bearing about 1,500 troops for the initial landing attacked it on September 8, 1863. To meet this formidable force, Lieutenant Dick Dowling had two small gunboats and a garrison of 46 men! Yet he disabled and captured two enemy craft, took about 350 prisoners, and turned back the entire expedition. His victory was a severe blow to the morale of the North and augmented doubts about the efficiency of the Federal Navy."<sup>18</sup>

The Federal troops were much more successful in other areas along the Gulf Coast. By 1863 they had overtaken Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Aransas Pass, Indianola, and others, leaving ONLY Galveston and Sabine Pass in Confederate hands.

On August 6, 1866, newly elected governor G. W. Jones proclaimed

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 193.

the insurrection of Texas over. Reconstruction in Texas proved to be nearly disastrous. The main problem was that of labor. To many former slaves, freedom meant freedom from work. "Cotton, practically the only money crop, declined in value from 31 cents per pound in 1866, to 17 cents in 1870 and 13 cents in 1875. The total production of cotton declined from 431,000 bales in 1859 to an average of 343,000 bales for the years from 1866 to 1870, both inclusive."<sup>19</sup> When working for wages was replaced in large part by tenant farming and the sharecropping system was instituted, cotton production by the year 1873 reached 500,000 bales per year.

The growth in the cattle industry also helped spark new life into the Texas economy; hundreds of thousands of cattle made their way from southern and western ranges to northern markets.

Industrial growth, although quite slow initially, advanced steadily. Railroad mileage increased from 395 miles in 1865 to 1,650 in 1874.

"Economic losses through the war and reconstruction were soon overcome, but the damage to political institutions was more enduring. The people could not forget that radical Republicans in Congress had imposed on the South a harsh program designed, it seemed, more for political purposes than for the general welfare. Thus, the Republican Party in the state was all but destroyed by the reaction against the Davis administration, and a one-party political system consequently has prevailed for a century."<sup>20</sup>

In 1872, with the election of a Democratic legislature and election of Governor Coke in 1873, the Democratic Party held a firm grip on State politics and were determined to rid the State of the last vestiges of radical Republican rule.

One of the most far-reaching accomplishments during the decade from 1876-1886 concerns public education. Both higher education and the State public school system were begun in that same period. The Agricultural and Mechanical College (present-day Texas A & M) was established near Bryan as the first institution of higher learning in the State (1876). Then, in 1883, the main University of Texas at Austin was opened, with the Galveston Medical Branch following in 1887.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

## VII. FROM AGRICULTURE TO COMMERCE

The greatest asset in converting the largely agricultural area of Texas to a State of industrial importance was the expansion of the railroads. Rapid, cheap, and dependable transportation was needed to cover the vast expanse of land and the scattered communities within the State.

In addition to local seductions of the railroads by communities (e.g., for a time Fort Worth offered bonuses to railroads coming into that city), a State law in 1871 heavily subsidized railroad building in the State. The bulk of railroad construction in Texas was completed within 20 years, and in 1890, Texas had 8,710 miles of railroads. This rapid increase made it possible for Texas to have more miles of railroad than any other state by 1904.

The industrialization in 1870 was still confined to small community shops; but, within the next several decades, the movement gained momentum and manufacturing came into its own, although it still depended heavily on agriculture and natural resources. Into the 1880's "flour milling was the leading industry, ranking ahead of that of lumbering. Meanwhile, manufacture of products from cottonseed steadily increased in importance, ranking second in the State's industrial economy in 1900."<sup>21</sup> Meat packing plants also grew in importance. The first was established in Victoria in 1868; later, plants were established in Fort Worth, Dallas, San Antonio, El Paso, and Amarillo.

In the mineral sphere, oil, of course, was the primary natural resource to be exploited. Oil was discovered accidentally in Nacogdoches County in 1867, and the Gulf Coast region is especially rich in this commodity.

There were also industrial developments in coal, salt, iron ore, limestone, granite, and sulphur mining.

"Paralleling the emergence of a commercial economy in Texas was the rise of cities. In 1870 only 6.7 percent of the people lived in incorporated urban areas of 2,500 population or more. By 1900 urban incorporated centers contained 17.1 percent of the population; and by 1930 the figure had climbed to 41 percent."<sup>22</sup> This explosive population growth and concentration in urban areas was brought about largely through better transportation facilities and through the astounding growth in oil and oil-related industries.

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<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 285.

Politically, during this era, perhaps the best known figure is that of James Stehen Hogg. His public career began in 1886 as attorney general under Lawrence Sullivan Ross. His efforts were directed against unlawfully operating insurance companies. He was also instrumental in the passage of antitrust legislation and measures were undertaken to regulate railroads operating in Texas. It wasn't until Hogg had been elected governor that a commission to regulate railroads was finally set up (April, 1891).

In 1914, another of the most well-remembered of Texas' governors was elected. James E. Ferguson, who rose from grinding poverty to be the chief executive of the State, had great influence in Texas politics for a generation. His determination to help the tenant farmer and his great appeal to that group led to his victory in the election in 1914. In 1916, Ferguson was re-elected easily and undertook a continuation of a constructive legislative program.

In 1917, Ferguson's popularity began to wane as his problems with the University of Texas, which had begun in 1915, came to a head. In June, 1917, as an outgrowth of that argument, Governor Ferguson vetoed the entire appropriation for the University. The situation worsened, and on September 24, the governor was convicted on ten of the 21 charges that had been made against him in impeachment proceedings. The impeachment forbid him from holding office again in the state of Texas.

The end of the first world war brought many changes on a State, as well as a national level. "The depression of 1920 was short-lived, and Texas shared the general prosperity that soon returned. New plants were erected for the manufacture and processing of goods, land values doubled, millions were invested in public utilities, and thousands of new oil wells belched forth their black gold. The state highway system was constructed, destined to be used by an ever-increasing number of foreign and Texan-owned cars. New colleges were built, and thousands of youths crowded the old ones; the public school system grew larger and more creditable each year. Prices of farm commodities lagged behind those enjoyed by industry, but bountiful crops tended to offset the price handicap. Texas was prosperous during the 'mad decade,' and people paid no heed to timid prophets here and there who told them that ahead were lean years that would devour the fat ones"<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p.318.

#### VIII. SIGNIFICANT SITES AND SUGGESTED POLICIES

Along with statehood have come many privileges as well as many responsibilities. Texas has had in the past and continues to have some of the most sobering and challenging problems with which any state has had to cope and seek solutions.

As can readily be seen, many of the major historical events in Texas have occurred in the counties in the Coastal Resources Management Program. There are certain areas which are especially rich with respect to historical sites, monuments, and architecturally significant sites that have played a major role in the development of the State.

Consequently many of these areas have been designated as historically significant points of interest by the Texas State Historical Survey Committee in a continuing effort to locate and preserve these areas (See Figure 1.). These sites have been included as a task in the Coastal Resources Management Program for two reasons. First of all, they provide educational benefits to anyone who is interested in the colorful history of our State. Secondly, and not to be overlooked, many of these sites lend themselves to tourist attractions, and this activity, bringing visitors from widely separated areas can be very beneficial to the region from a financial standpoint.

With thirty-four historical sites marked with plaques by the Texas State Historical Survey Committee, Galveston County is able to claim the largest number of sites in the coastal area. Many of these sites are buildings of architectural importance, such as the Galveston County Courthouse and St. Mary's Cathedral. Others such as West Galveston Island, which provided sanctuary for the famous Jean Laffite, and a Karankawa Indian campsite, lend themselves easily to imaginary pictures of dashing pirates and cannibalistic Indians.

Of the thirty-five counties considered in the Coastal Resources Management Program, Harris County contains the second largest number of historically important sites. Some of the most famous of these include the San Jacinto Monument and Battleground, the Battleship *Texas*, Old Market Square, Lynch's Ferry, and the original Port of Houston. As for culturally significant sites, Houston's new Astrodome and Astrohall merit mention.

Scattered throughout the remainder of the area are such varied areas as cemeteries, which are important for local historical reasons, all the way to sites as the first sulphur mine in Texas, the first railroad line in the State, and sites of famous battles of the Texas Revolution, such as the Goliad Massacre.

From the preceding information, it should be obvious that historical and cultural sites must be taken into consideration



Map of Texas showing county boundaries and numbers. An inset map shows the location of the study area in the southern tip of Texas. A scale bar indicates 0 to 100 miles.

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when planning for any land usage or developmental aspects along the Texas coast. The "Goals for Texas" program, a joint undertaking of the Office of the Governor and many local governmental entities plus countless private citizens, presented in its Phase II Report a set of objectives for the entire State. Those pertinent guidelines set down by that effort which relate to the State in general or to specific points within the Coastal Zone are given below.

#### SIX-YEAR GOALS

Develop State and local financing programs for the purchase and the renovation of buildings of historic and architectural value by developing a cooperative program with the State Historical Survey Committee, the Parks and Wildlife Department, local civic organizations, and governmental units.

Determine historic site acquisition methods which are to be employed and obtain the selected sites.

Increase public knowledge and appreciation of South Plains history by acquisition of historic and prehistoric sites.

Identify methods to publicly or privately acquire historic sites of statewide and regional significance and expand existing sites.

Acquire, preserve, and use local and county histories and records as resources for annual prehistory and historical celebrations.

Acquire and develop plans for preserving historical sites such as: Fort Concho, Fort McKavett, Old Fort Terrell, Fort Chadbourne, Fort Lancaster, Real Presidio de San Saba, Mission San Saba, Camp Elizabeth, Camp J. E. Johnston; and Camp San Saba.

Provide museums in Starr County, Zapata County, Jim Hogg County, and Webb County for the preservation and educational display of historical materials.

Cooperate with the State Historical Survey Committee, the Parks and Wildlife Department, and Highway Department in the development of a regional historic preservation plan.

Identify, acquire, and develop historical sites such as Pea Ridge site in Ward County, buildings in Fort Stockton, and the grounds at Horsehead Crossing.

Acquire and develop the Indian pictographs at Paint Rock as a State historical site.

## TWO-YEAR GOALS

Analyze existing historic sites and determine remedial work required for those sites to be used as tourist attractions.

Identify and inventory buildings which portray local and Texas history and significant architectural design by encouraging local citizens to organize local historical societies or to work through civic clubs in cooperation with appropriate State agencies.

Provide for the preservation of sites of interest of local cities and organizations with the use of federal and State grants.

Preserve local, urban, and rural historical sites of interest through expanded planning.

Encourage a comprehensive historical site study that will be integrated into the program of site preservation as contrasted to acquisition and development of facilities for active recreation.

Initiate archeological excavations of those sites where historical records are incomplete.

Expand existing historic sites to incorporate all of the significant regional historic features.

Locate and identify historic and prehistoric sites of regional significance; and acquire for development the Comanche Canyon site in Lubbock as an area of historic interest and recreation opportunity.

Encourage the designation of all registered historic landmarks on Texas highway maps and related publications.

Establish a restoration and preservation program for historic sites and determine a sound method of management.

Survey, preserve, mark, restore, and interpret prehistoric sites and historic buildings, with special attention to band stands, courthouses, opera houses, and other buildings which can become attractions for the Texas Travel Trails.

Provide historical markers for all historical sites with permanent type plaques or stones containing descriptions.

Locate citizens who are qualified and interested in preserving recreational and historical sites and organize working committees.

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